

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina Office of the Governor

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GOV. EASLEY DECLARES SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK MARCH 14-20

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley has declared March 14-20 as Severe Weather Awareness Week in North Carolina, with Wed., March 17, as the designated day for statewide tornado drills in government buildings and schools.

“Tornadoes can occur with little or no warning, and you may have only a short time to make life-or-death decisions,” Easley said. “North Carolina was fortunate last year in that no fatalities occurred from the 31 tornadoes that touched down, but there were two known injuries and \$2.9 million in damage from those twisters.”

The governor is asking citizens to take a few minutes during Severe Weather Awareness Week to review the N.C. Department of Crime Control and Public Safety’s recommendations on protective actions on tornadoes and other damaging storms.

Last year in North Carolina, the National Weather Service issued 86 tornado warnings, 823 severe thunderstorm warnings and 343 flash flood warnings. The state had 397 incidents of severe thunderstorm winds of 60 miles per hour or greater with 11 injuries, and 411 severe hail incidents. North Carolina also had one major hurricane, six severe winter storms including an ice storm, five fatal lightning strikes and seven flood-related fatalities.

Dr. Kenneth Taylor, director of CCPS’ Division of Emergency Management, said the safest place during a tornado is underground in a basement or storm cellar.

“If there is no basement, go to an inner hallway or smaller inner room without windows such as a bathroom or closet,” Taylor said. “Try to find something sturdy you can get under to protect yourself from flying debris or a collapsed roof.”

“People in mobile homes are especially vulnerable to damage from high winds and should seek shelter in a prearranged site if severe weather is predicted,” Taylor said. For people who are outside and no shelter is available, lie on the ground, in a ditch or depression if possible. “Use your arms to protect your head and neck.”

Officials urge residents to listen to local radio, television, weather channels or a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration broadcast for information on severe weather updates.

More information, including a copy of the governor’s proclamation and a tornado fact sheet, is available at <http://www.nccrimecontrol.org>.

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